GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2212
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2013
DELAY IN PROCESSING OF PASSPORTS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of inordinate delay in processing passport applications have come to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the time-frame laid down for the issue of passports under various categories;

(c) whether any mechanism has been put in place for the redressal of complaints and grievances of the applicants and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to make the process of issuing passports easier and quicker?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) As per Government instructions, passports to Indian citizens are issued as per the provisions of the Passports Act 1967 and the Passport Rules 1980 as amended from time to time. Prior to issuing a passport, the Passport Issuing Authority must establish the applicant's citizenship, identity and an absence of criminal record as mandated by the Passports Act. This requires verification of personal particulars of applicants and background check of their criminal antecedents which are time consuming.

2. Government is aware that in some cases, there is inordinate delay in issuance of passport. The reasons for delay normally are as under:

(i) delays in receipt of police verification reports within the stipulated time of 21 days;

(ii) receipt of incomplete police reports due to submission of incomplete information/ documentation by applicants;

(iii) increase in demand for passport; and

(iv) shortage of manpower in the Central Passport Organization, to deal with the increasing demand for services.

3. Under Passport Seva Project (PSP), Government has endeavoured to streamline passport services, including the processing time taken in acceptance, issuance and dispatch of passports. Under this System, the Government has envisaged the following 'desired service levels' excluding the day of submission of passport application:-

(i) 3 working days in case of Normal Passports in 'No' or 'Post-Police verification' cases.

(ii) 3 working days + time taken for police verification in Fresh Passport cases requiring 'Pre-Police verification' and

(iii) One working day in case of Tatkaal passports subject to production of requisite documents.

(c) 4. Yes. Under PSP, the Ministry has put in place a strengthened Grievance Redressal system under which a National Call Centre has been set up for disseminating information about various services and dealing with grievances and citizen's feedback. The system has a toll free number (1800-258-1800) which operates on a 247 basis in 17 Indian vernacular languages. A help desk has been set up which can be accessed by citizens through the www.passportindia.gov.in portal where suggestions and grievances can be sent.

5. Apart from the above, there is a Public Grievance Redressal Cell (PGRC) established in the CPV Division of the Ministry under the supervision of Chief Passport Officer. It deals with grievances received via telephone, e-mail, post and also references from various Government Offices. In addition, all Passport Offices handle public grievances through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAM) website of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. The latest position on their applications, alongwith directions for further action, is posted on this website, easily accessed by the public.

6. The names, addresses and phone numbers of the Public Grievance Officer are also installed in the Passport Offices. The complaint/suggestion boxes are also installed on the strategic locations in the Passport Offices. There is a Public Grievance redressal mechanism in all Passport Offices to enquire into, and redress, any complaints from citizens in a timeframe. Information and Facilitation counters, PG Cell and Help Desks have been set up to assist applicants and to attend to grievances/complaints

expeditiously.

(d) (7) In order to further simplify the passport procedure, a Mission Mode Project (MMP) was identified under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of Government of India which inter-alia includes many other high impact e-Governance initiatives and projects. The MMP on Passports, named Passport Seva Project, aims "to deliver all Passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner & in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce". The PSP incorporates the global best practices in the passport issuance system. The key features of the PSP are enumerated below:

(i) Establishing 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) for delivering all front-end citizen services. (The Project has been completely executed and all 77 PSKs were made operational by early June 2012)

(ii) Creation of on-line Passport Portal [www.passportindia.gov.in] for offering Passport services.

(iii) Providing links to designated points in Police Department.

(iv) Establishing a Central Passport Printing Facility (CPPF) for handling extra load of Dispatch process to Postal Department.

(v) Introduction of a multi-modal Information and Grievance handling system.

(vi) Creating a centralized IT system linking all PSK's, Passport Offices, Police and Postal Departments.

(vii) Introducing productivity linked incentive scheme for Government employees.

(viii) Establishing a proper Program Governance Structure for managing the implementation and operation of all the above.